

## CLAIMS

1. An article of manufacture for compiling and maintaining information for use in routing and transmitting content to a machine via a network, comprising:

a computer-readable medium including information for use in transmitting content to a machine;

wherein the medium includes fields for specifying an identification of the machine, an address of the machine, and user-profile information for use in determining a type of content to transmit to the machine, the user-profile information being specified in an hierarchical attribute value pair data structure.

2. The article of manufacture of claim 1 wherein the computer-readable medium further specifies attributes of a user associated with the user-profile information and the hierarchical structure identifies hierarchical relationships among the attributes.

3. The article of manufacture of claim 2 wherein the medium specifies information identifying the user.

4. The article of manufacture of claim 2 wherein the medium specifies information identifying preferences of the user.

5. The article of manufacture of claim 2 wherein the medium specifies information identifying a room which the user is assigned for a chat service.

6. The article of manufacture of claim 5 wherein the medium specifies information identifying members of the room for the chat service.

5 7. The article of manufacture of claim 1 wherein the computer-readable medium further specifies an indication of a directory for use in obtaining instructions for routing the content.

8. The article of manufacture of claim 1 wherein the medium includes the user-profile information for use in selecting at least one of the following to transmit to the machine:

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specifying in the medium, using the information, an identification of a machine, an address of the machine, and user-profile information for use in determining a type of content to transmit to the machine; and

storing the user-profile information in an hierarchical attribute value pair data structure.

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12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

specifying in the medium attributes of a user associated with the user-profile information;

and

specifying in the hierarchical structure hierarchical relationships among the attributes.

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13. The method of claim 12 wherein the specifying step comprises specifying in the medium information identifying the user.

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14. The method of claim 12 wherein the specifying step comprises specifying in the medium information identifying preferences of the user.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein the specifying step comprises specifying in the medium information identifying a room which the user is assigned for a chat service.

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16. The method of claim 15 wherein the specifying step comprises specifying in the medium information identifying members of the room for the chat service.

17. The method of claim 11 wherein the specifying step comprises specifying in the medium an indication of a directory for use in obtaining instructions for routing the content.

18. The method of claim 11, further comprising dynamically changing the user-profile information in the hierarchical structure based upon updated information.

19. The method of claim 12, further comprising querying the user in order to obtain the user-profile information.

20. The method of claim 11, further comprising transmitting content to the machine for a particular service based upon the user-profile information.

21. The method of claim 11, further comprising dynamically updating the user-profile information.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the dynamically updating step comprises: monitoring activity of a user associated with the user-profile information; and updating the user-profile information based upon the monitored activity.

23. The method of claim 11 wherein the specifying step comprises specifying the user-profile information for use in selecting at least one of the following to transmit to the machine: information available via a Uniform Resource Identifier, video content, audio content, multimedia content, a particular video stream, or an executable object.

24. The method of claim 11 wherein the specifying step comprises specifying the user-profile information for use in selectively transmitting survey questions to the user.

5 Sub H 25. The method of claim 11 wherein the specifying step comprises specifying the address of a personal computer, a television, a cable box, a satellite box, video game console, or a personal digital assistant.

10 26. A method of accessing information for use in routing and transmitting content to a machine via a network, comprising:

15 establishing a network connection from a machine;

accessing via the network connection an hierarchical attribute value pair data structure stored in a computer-readable medium; and

20 transmitting information via the network connection for specifying in the data structure an identification of the machine, an address of the machine, and user-profile information for use in determining a type of content to transmit to the machine.

27. The method of claim 26, further comprising storing the data structure in a memory associated with the machine.

28. The method of claim 26, further comprising storing the data structure in a memory associated with a server having the network connection with the machine.

29. The method of claim 26, further comprising dynamically updating the user-profile information.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein the dynamically updating step comprises:  
monitoring activity of a user associated with the user-profile information; and  
updating the user-profile information based upon the monitored activity.

31. The method of claim 26, further comprising selecting, based upon the user-profile information, at least one of the following for transmission to the machine: information available via a Uniform Resource Identifier, video content, audio content, multimedia content, a particular video stream, or an executable object.

32. An apparatus for accessing information for use in routing and transmitting content to a machine via a network, comprising:  
a network module for establishing a network connection from a machine;  
an access module for accessing via the network connection an hierarchical attribute value pair data structure stored in a computer-readable medium; and  
a transmit module for transmitting information via the network connection for specifying in the data structure an identification of the machine, an address of the machine, and user-profile information for use in determining a type of content to transmit to the machine.

33. The apparatus of claim 32, further comprising a store module for storing the data structure in a memory associated with the machine.

34. The apparatus of claim 32, further comprising a store module for storing the data structure in a memory associated with a server having the network connection with the machine.

5 35. The apparatus of claim 32, further comprising an update module for dynamically updating the user-profile information.

Sub # 7 36. The apparatus of claim 35 wherein the update module comprises:  
a module for monitoring activity of a user associated with the user-profile information;  
and  
a module for updating the user-profile information based upon the monitored activity.

10 37. The apparatus of claim 32, further comprising a selection module for selecting, based upon the user-profile information, at least one of the following for transmission to the machine:  
15 information available via a Uniform Resource Identifier, video content, audio content, multimedia content, a particular video stream, or an executable object.